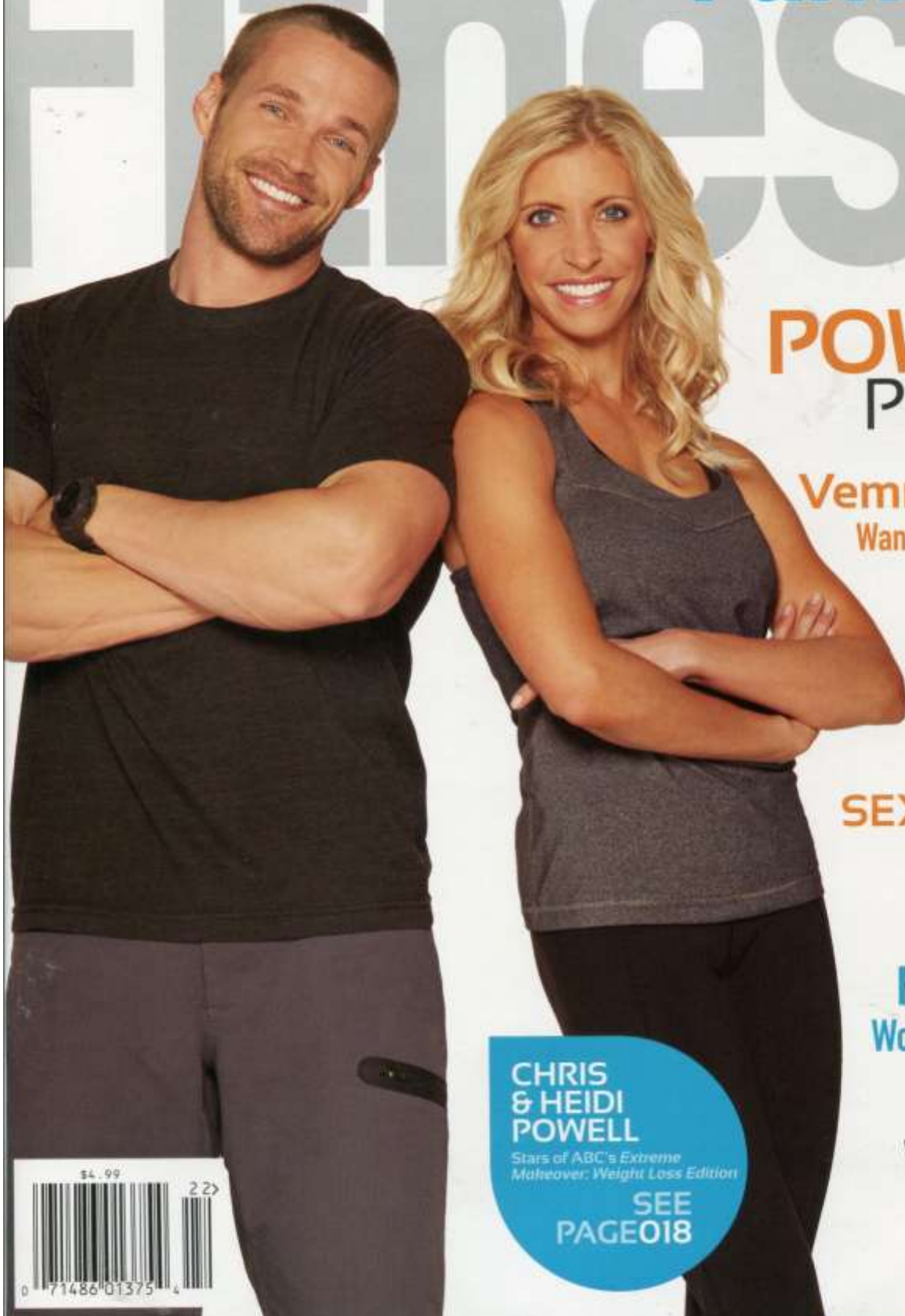


TV'S HOTTEST TRAINERS REVEAL SECRETS TO SUCCESS

# Family

# Fitness



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## Cover Story

# POWELL POWER

BY Laura Dayton

### CHRIS POWELL,

star of ABC's primetime *Extreme Makeover: Weight Loss Edition*, and his wife, Heidi, explain how the dramatic, life-transforming weight loss they achieve is like parenting and providing unconditional love.

## The Story Behind the Man

**Most people know of Chris Powell's rags-to-riches tale that took him from a mere personal trainer to the hottest star status of any trainer in this decade. I likened him to the "Grandfather of Fitness," Jack LaLanne, who literally introduced the world to exercise and nutrition and built the prototypes of most gym equipment in use today. Chris, in his ever humble way, responded, "Just to have my name mentioned in the same sentence with Jack LaLanne is a great honor. What Heidi and I do are miraculous transformations on a personal level, but I don't think we'll ever do what Jack did on a global level."**

Well, I don't know. This couple may eliminate gastric bypass surgery, save a few hundred lives, and change the way doctors, nutritionists and trainers approach the morbidly obese. That sounds like it could go global.

## The Making of a Star

In 2003, David Smith was 630 pounds. His doctor told him he had, at best, four more years to live. David appealed to *Good Morning Arizona* and pleaded for them to find someone who could save his life. When local trainer, Chris Powell, took up the cause, the news cameras began rolling for the next 26 months.

"I showed up at his house every other day. I was practically living with him," says Chris.

"At that point in my career, I had only worked with people maybe 40 or 50 pounds overweight. It was intimidating at first. I had no idea how to approach it, so I took a very scientific, methodical approach. I designed a program that I knew would physically work."

"As we began the process, David started losing weight, but I knew this wasn't going to be enough. The turning point came when he began to open up and talk about the traumas in his life. I began to realize there were real reasons he was this obese. He had real issues to deal with. I discovered there is a whole new realm of transformation, beyond just the physical."

A photograph of Chris Powell and Heidi Klum. Chris is on the left, wearing a black t-shirt and dark pants, flexing his right bicep. Heidi is on the right, wearing a grey tank top, flexing her left bicep. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a light, textured wall with some faint blue lines in the upper left corner.

## CHRIS & HEIDI

Learn more about  
Chris and Heidi  
teaming up with  
Vemma

SEE  
PAGE022

"WE HAVE  
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PROGRAM."

Chris Powell

David's transformation took 26 months. He lost 401 pounds and looks forward to a whole new life ahead of him. All the while the news cameras captured the heartaches and joys. Other media jumped on this incredible weight loss story; and because of Chris' on-and-off-camera charisma, easygoing style, sparkling eyes and genuine smile, a star was born.

Chris is now working on his third season of ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Weight Loss Edition*. Season 2 has been moved to primetime on Sunday nights.

## Inside the Powell Family

At Chris's side is wife, Heidi, who has also played a big role behind the cameras in helping the superobese lose hundreds of pounds. Heidi, who like Chris is a certified trainer and life coach, will be introduced to fans of the show in Season 2. The couple lives in Arizona with two of Heidi's children from a previous marriage — a boy named Matix, age 7 and a girl named Marley, 5 — plus their new 11-month-old son, William Cash.

"I named Marley because I love Bob Marley," explains Heidi. "When we found out we were having a boy, we decided to name him William — that's Chris' first name — and Cash, because I love Johnny Cash, and it's the first initial of Chris' middle name. Then we just both fell in love with the name."

Has the newfound fame changed Chris? That's a question Heidi jumps on.

"I have to say, Chris has not changed one bit. I'm not joking. I'm married to him; and if I'm not with him, I speak with him every single day, and he has not changed. Honestly. He is the most





amazing human being I've ever met, and he has helped me be the best person I can be. He has done wonderful things."

Chris, who acquired a slight blush at his wife's enthusiastic praise, chimes in. "I feel the same, I look the same. We live in Arizona, we don't live in Hollywood. We're surrounded by our same friends and family. We wake up at six and Heidi and I do a workout in the garage then take the kids to school. It's definitely crazy, but unless I'm on location or at the airport and someone asks for a picture with me, everything is about the same."

"Ultimately, what we're trying to accomplish is a foundation and platform to share a message. It's never been about the material stuff. Truly, we both want to feel we're making a difference."

But having a child, who is not yet a year old, must have changed Chris's life. Right?

Chris' voice becomes softer, more reflective, and he chooses his words slowly and carefully.

"It's hard trying to describe it. I've never been more tired in my life," he says with a smile. "When you have this little being there, he is pure joy; there is nothing else other than pure joy. He's got so much happiness inside. A little guy like that can, well, remind us that we all have that, as well. You can see where we all come from, a place of pure delight.

"It's a feeling you have to experience; but when I put that guy in bed and just look at him, he can just melt your heart. When I go on the road and away from them for a week, I feel like I'm missing a part of me. I could go on forever about what Cash, the Cashman, our little Cashew, means to our family. I already had a relationship with Matix and Marley, but now they have a brother; and I'm the father, and it's brought us all that much closer on so many levels. Heidi has shown me the ropes, but I'm there for it all, changing diapers, giving him a bath . . ."

Heidi finally grabs the chance to add her perspective.

"He was so wonderful with Matix and Marley, I knew he'd be a great dad. I was trying to clue him in, telling him how no child will ever be like your first. I'd tell him, 'I can't wait until you have your own. You will feel something that you never knew existed.' There is nothing Chris would not do for the family. We both believe in unconditional love; you may make a mistake, but nothing you do can ever make us stop loving you."

Chris agrees. "Heidi is such a phenomenal coach and teacher. She's been guiding me to be their friend but also to be their parent and help them become good people. When you see them going down the wrong path, you go after them and gently guide them back."

"Another beautiful part of parenting is how it fits into what we are already doing. Parenting is coaching. There are so many parallels; and, having the

experience of being a parent, you start to see similar patterns," Chris says.

"We have to teach our clients to learn to love themselves. As a parent, we show unconditional love, and we carry that into our program. It's powerful. It empowers them. They feel safe. When they struggle, we let them know we love them. We encourage them. They will fall hundreds of times, and when they get back up I'm always right there. It's not always fun and high-fives."

"It's about believing," says Heidi. "If they don't believe they can do it, you've lost. One of our jobs is to let them know they are powerful achievers. People can and do realize they are capable of doing anything they set their mind to."

It definitely sounds as if there is more personal goal setting, empowerment, healing, and breaking through mental barriers going on, than there are pounds disappearing. I asked both Chris and Heidi if they ever had any formal training in psychology, and both shook their heads.

## Psychologists or Trainers?

"My knowledge comes from personal life experience," says Heidi. "I've learned more from having friends and family deal with addiction and going through a few bouts of rehab than from any life-coaching seminar or camp." But that's how Chris and Heidi met, in a coaching course.

"Toward the beginning of the transformation, the clients come to boot camp with me in Arizona. Some spend a month, others two or three. Food addiction is very similar to drugs, alcohol and other addictions. It was a blessing my family and friends had to deal with these things, because it gave me some basic skills to be more effective working with our show's cast."

Chris feels his success in getting clients to open up is more intuitive than classroom honed. "I'm being completely honest and a bit vulnerable. I don't know that my skill set is that great. I've gone through my struggles. But I've always felt compassion for the other guy. Even in grade school, I would gravitate to

the kids that were singled out. I'd make them feel good, and they'd like me."

"I'm still searching for that. I'm on my own journey, as well. The compassion that I have with people helps me to build the relationship. Then something kind of magical happens. Because my intentions are good, approaching this is a lot easier. It opens up communication sooner, and on a deeply personal level."

With this kind of year-long intensity, the emotional highs and lows, you must go far beyond the normal boundaries of trainer and client, right? Both Chris and Heidi burst into smiles.

"Absolutely, we talk with them all the time, we speak with them almost daily," says Heidi.

"Rachel is our nanny when we travel. Alex just flew in for a visit," adds Chris.

"Someone from Season 2 is moving to Arizona, and another is moving close," Heidi adds.

"It's awesome. We've developed true relationships with our clients. Some we spent a year with, some two years. They have their own life purpose and don't rely on us. They come here because we've become friends, like a big family.

## A True Team

Heidi has always been an important part of the transformation, and both of them are looking forward to having her on camera in Season 3.

"We think along the same lines, but both with unique perspectives. Sometimes people don't always connect with me," says Chris. "Some of the women need another woman to talk to, and Heidi is so incredibly powerful and effective as a coach. With her on the show, they'll really feel they are part of the family."

Any advice for those who don't land a spot on your show? Chris thinks about this. "I guess it comes down to two words: Start small. One of the biggest mistakes we see everybody make is when they begin, there is a tingling of excitement and they tend to overreach. They might drink a gallon of water one day and 45



Guy D'Alema/ABC, via Getty Images

minutes of cardio the next. This can go two, three or more times. Then one evening when they've put it off until 11 at night, they decide not to do it. They sweep it under the rug and say, "I'll start back next Monday."

"A broken promise is a devastating setback; they no longer believe in themselves. When they ask me how much cardio at first, I tell them five minutes. When it comes to nutrition, we take it one food at a time. Among the many secret weapons for weight loss Chris has in his arsenal is Vemma Bod•ē (see page 24). Trying to jump from A to X is not how the protocol works; it

has to be A to B, B to C. That's how we transform lives in the long run. People can handle that. Start small. Take it one step at a time, and that's how they learn to believe in themselves."

So what's in store for Season 2? "Without giving anything away, I'd just like to say there are some incredible transformations. They captured it really, really well." ■

*To keep up with the Powells, add them on [facebook.com/realchrisspowell.com](https://www.facebook.com/realchrisspowell.com); on [youtube.com/realchrisspowell](https://www.youtube.com/realchrisspowell); and follow on Twitter: [@realchrisspowell](https://twitter.com/realchrisspowell) and [@heidilaneppowell](https://twitter.com/heidilaneppowell).*

## BEFORE



RACHEL WEIGHED 369 POUNDS WHEN ABC'S EXTREME MAKEOVER: WEIGHT LOSS EDITION AND CHRIS POWELL, TRANSFORMATION SPECIALIST AND BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, CAME TO HER RESCUE. AN OVER-ACHIEVER, RACHEL RARELY FAILED TO OUTPERFORM AT ANY GIVEN TASK; HER ONE EXCEPTION WAS WEIGHT LOSS. RACHEL FELT LIKE AN "ELEPHANT" IN HER OWN HOME AND A FAILURE IN HER PARENT'S EYES. HERE, CHRIS ANNOUNCES RACHEL'S INCREDIBLE 161-POUND WEIGHT LOSS AT THE END OF SEASON II!